

The Megiddo Message

September 25, 1954

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"As I stand upon the shore in the full blessed light of freedom, and see for me the ending of the weary centuries of darkness, I lift up my heart in thankfulness to God that I have His blessed Word, and by it have been made free from superstition, free to walk in the wonderful light of Truth."

—L. T. Nichols

THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

September 25, 1954

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The Megiddo Message—is published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. It defends and ably demonstrates the infallibility, harmony, and Divine inspiration of the Bible. It enables you to give a reason for your faith, to answer the atheist, and to instruct your children correctly. If you are not already a subscriber, **THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE** will be sent to your home every two weeks for six months, absolutely free. Your name and address is all we ask. Subscribers, please send in names of your friends who may be interested in reading this publication, for a free sample copy. No obligation on your part or theirs.

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Synopsis of Our Faith and Work

THE Megiddo Mission is an independent organization. It is in no way affiliated with any other religious body. It was founded in the year 1880 by the late Rev. L. T. Nichols, and has been located at the present address in Rochester, N. Y., since 1904.

The word "Megiddo" is of Hebrew origin, its meaning being: True soldiers of God; God is in this place with a band of troops.

It is the firm belief of the Megiddo Mission that the second coming of Jesus Christ and the inauguration of His world-wide Kingdom are imminent. The Bible clearly declares that this event will be preceded by the coming of Elijah the Prophet to herald the glorious Day, to gather the saints, and raise the dead to be ready to meet the Lord when He comes.

Being convinced that these events are near at hand, the Megiddo Mission is earnestly endeavoring to prepare a people to be ready for the Lord's advent. Moral perfection besides purity of doctrine is a direct Biblical command. Among the members of the Megiddo Mission perfection of character is the goal. Invitations are always extended to whomsoever will to come and join us in this work, and partake of the "water of life freely."

CONTENTS

	page
Light at Last	1
The Outlook and the Uplook	2
God Is Merciful	4
Past and Present	6
The Meaning of <i>Megiddo</i>	7
A Rule of the Road . . . Safe Driving	8
Great in the Things Which Last	10
Perspective	11
Meditations on the Word	12
The Gospel Sound	(Back cover)

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LIGHT AT LAST

THAT light, in and of itself, is invisible is an axiom of elementary physics. Something has to be present to reflect that light before the light becomes obvious.

Throughout the long centuries of the Dark Ages, as every student of history must acknowledge, the clouds of superstition and false teachings hung dark over the entire world, obliterating the sunlight of true religion which has been reflected with undimmed brilliancy in the lives of the ancient Prophets, Jesus, and the Apostles. During those Dark Ages the Bible alone survived to bear witness to the eternal goodness, purity and holiness of that lost religion.

When the rising power of Rome crushed beneath its tread the last of the faithful Christians, the *Light* went into obscurity and remained in obscurity because *there was no man living to reflect that light.*

The Prophet Daniel, in vision, looked down through the ages to come. He beheld a great and wide river over which an angel watched. On the nearer shore of the river stood a solitary mortal; far across in the distance, separated by that great stream, stood another. Daniel looked on in silent wonder. One was heard to ask, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" The white-robed angel above the waters replied solemnly that it should be "for a time, times and a half"—prophetic language, which interpreted means, twelve hundred sixty years.

For twelve hundred sixty years the waters would roll between those two wonders. Through those long, weary centuries the world must wait. During that time men would "love darkness rather than light." *Afterward, the wonder whom Daniel beheld beyond the waters would arise to again reflect the Light.*

L. T. Nichols, born October 1, 1844, grew up in the frontier State of Wisconsin. Like all children of religious parents, he had been rigorously educated in the ideas that passed for religion. But he did not love darkness. At an early age he turned the searchlight of his boyish inquisitiveness upon the religious systems of the day. Before each "I believe," he placed a pertinent "Why?" The words of a noted divine or a paragraph from a church creed was not evidence, when the ideas expressed conflicted with reason and with what he read in his beloved Bible.

One point after another of the old, time-honored creeds lay open to question as his analytical powers developed. Nothing must be taken for granted; even the Bible must prove itself true or be classed as human literature.

After a search for truth in many churches, he was forced to the conclusion that all were in darkness, and that since the seventh century not a man had known the joyful sound of the true and living gospel. And so, with one grand, courageous, splendidly daring sweep, he threw away all the dead weight of tradition, creeds, church "fathers," councils, dogmas and opinions of men, and started anew his search for light—this time in the Word of God alone.

He saw that if he was to succeed in his task he must understand the tongues in which God spoke to His people, so he unhesitatingly plunged into the study of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, mastering them sufficiently for his purpose. This was absolutely necessary, because, while the

great bulk of the truth can be plainly found in the King James Version, yet in many places the translation is colored by the Stygian darkness which enveloped the minds of the medieval savants who gave it to us in its present form.

He spent years in careful study. During that time, one by one, the old pagan and unscriptural dogmas were tested and rejected and the Word of God at length stripped of the theological teachings that had accumulated about it through the centuries. As the Truth was disclosed to view, seeming contradictions and impossibilities vanished. Instead of quailing before the infidel, it was the infidel's turn to quail before the mighty power of Truth.

What joy unspeakable to know that upon the pages of that blessed Bible there are no impossibilities, contradictions or absurdities in the language in which God caused it to be written to man!

Our knowledge of this Truth, which has become our heritage, we owe to the lifelong efforts of the Rev. L. T. Nichols. He accomplished what no church reformer had hitherto accomplished, what, indeed, no church reformer had ever attempted—he re-discovered the ancient religion of the Prophets, Jesus, and the Apostles. Time and again a new discovery would mean a complete reversal of his former position, but there was no hesitation. His honesty forbade him to cling to a proved error simply because he had believed it in the past. It was this willingness to exchange error for truth, whatever the cost, which enabled him to succeed gloriously where others had failed.

It is through righteous deeds and holy living, through a pure and spotless character, that true religion shines. Without such a mirror, the noblest preaching is lost in the darkness as light is lost in a vacuum. Not all at once, but little by little did the high and holy standard of the old ancient Gospel, the one true Faith, come to view. While a noble challenge, it was also a colossal one; but as with the doctrine, so in practice, this lover of truth bravely lifted his living to reflect the Light. Thus by example, by precept and by the Law of God he labored untiringly with others that they might likewise by their lives bear witness to the Truth.

He experienced the supreme moment of his life when he uttered the following words: "As I stand upon the shore in the full blessed light of freedom, and see for me the ending of the weary centuries of darkness, I lift up my heart in thankfulness to God that I have His blessed Word, and by it have been made free from superstition, free to walk in the wonderful light of Truth."

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Our leader sleeps now—until the Resurrection Morning. But, praise God, Truth's rays shall never again be dimmed! As in the days of old, men and women shall, through righteous deeds and holy living, by pure and spotless characters, reflect the Light of Truth until the "day dawn and the day star arise," until Christ the Messiah returns again to establish His glorious Kingdom, to roll away the clouds of error and sin forever.

The Outlook and the Uplook

The Outlook

IT IS BAD: no sane person denies it. Human perversity seems to have run its mad course almost to the limit. The human race, with all its splendid potentialities for good, for progress, for constructive activity, seems bent on its own destruction. Tides of hatred, violence, fear and despair are daily engulfing the proud structure of what we once called Civilization. The world is at sea—a very stormy sea—without anchor, lifeboat, chart, compass or pilot. And its seams are opening fast.

Columns could be written of the hopeless condition of our world, politically, economically, socially, morally and ecclesiastically; but we spare our readers the dismal repetition of facts they already know too well. What does it all mean? How will it all end? are the questions of the hour; and no man has the answers.

Human imagination likes to imagine a Golden Age in the past, always a generation or two back, when all was well. As a matter of fact, the "good old days" never existed, although they have been better than at present. But the Back-look is generally as depressing as the Outlook, and offers us no hope that some day things might be different. It is small wonder that life has been cynically described as a "brief and discreditable episode upon one of the minor planets."

Many and various have been the formulas and expedients tried by well-meaning and sincere men and women to better conditions. None of them have succeeded. None of them have a possible chance to succeed. The task is too great; the ancient evils too strongly entrenched in human nature and our social organizations; the adverse tides too strong. The clouds thicken; the picture grows darker. Sick at heart we close our eyes and try not to think of the future.

Or, perhaps, we remember that in this seething, troubled world of change and decay and disappointment, there is one thing that changes not, that never disappoints—the Word of the Eternal God. Written expressly for our day and time, it is a tower of hope, not afar off but very nigh to every one of us. With a great sense of relief, a consciousness that at last we have arrived, we turn to its hallowed and ever-comforting pages, and hear the voice of the Eternal as it speaks to us across the years.

.....

This know also, that in the last days, perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures, more than lovers of God.

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived (II. Tim. 3: 1—4, 13).

The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net. That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up (Micah 7: 2, 3).

Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. As-

semble yourselves and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord (Joel 3: 9—11).

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book (Daniel 12: 1).

The Uplook

I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, from whence help shall come to me. My help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth (Psalm 120: 1, 2, Douay Version).

Lifting our eyes from this welter of ugliness and bestiality, this sea of mire and blood and tears, we see light—a pure, unclouded beam direct from the Source of all light. We see plan, purpose, order, beauty. We behold an ordered, majestic march of events from the dawn of history to the present time, each having its position in the perfect whole. Behind it all, watching over all, directing all to a definite and certain end, is—God.

Consider for a moment what His eternal plan is.

For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited (Isaiah 45: 18).

Inhabited by whom? The mass of unregenerate humanity who now swarm and squabble over its surface? No! In the beginning God took His oath:

As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord (Numbers 14: 21).

His glory, the Prophet Isaiah informs us (46: 13), is Israel—spiritual Israel—His people. He has planned, then, to fill this earth with His people, glorified and immortal. Through the centuries He has been silently working, selecting the best from the vast reservoir of humanity, as a lumberman might select a few choice trees for a special purpose out of a great forest. The rest of the trees, not being usable, are permitted to flourish at will so long as they do not interfere with the growth of his best trees, in which case the axe of the forester may be brought into use. So God selects a choice few, those in every land and time who will make themselves worthy of eternal life by complying strictly with His conditions. The rest, the masses to whom it is too much work or trouble to keep the Law, being present only by accident of birth, are not counted, but are permitted to make their own history—and what a history it has been! Only when God's plan for His people and His future Kingdom are involved does He intervene in the affairs of the ungodly; this has happened more than once, and will happen again. We see it in the Uplook.

And as a worthless scrub forest is cleared away to make room for cultivation or settlement, so this jungle of lawless humanity will be cleared and cleaned up, violently and effectively, once for all. And soon. LOOK UP!

For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it. But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it (Prov. 2: 21, 22).

God has unlimited time at His disposal, and has seen fit to allot six thousand years for the first and most important preparatory era, the selection and development of a relatively small number of co-rulers for His future Kingdom on earth (Rev. 5:9, 10). These are the choice fruit of the earth, men and women who overcame and perfected their character under severe trials and adverse circumstances. God will always have the *best*: the fittest shall survive.

This period of six thousand years is almost ended. Our present calculation of time being admittedly erroneous, no man knows the day or hour of the great change, but the times and seasons (I. Thess. 5:1—3) are an open book to those who care to see. **LOOK UP!**

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh (Matt. 24:44).

Nineteen centuries ago the great King of this future arrangement (Luke 1:30—33; John 18:37) came into the world and worked out His salvation in an amazingly short time, leaving us the Perfect Example. His formula was simple enough: so great was His faith and so intensely devoted was He to the task in hand that He never had to learn a lesson twice. He is now at His Father's right hand, enjoying His well-earned reward. On the day of His departure from this world's familiar scenes, eleven men of His intimate friends and followers saw Him ascend, borne by angelic beings. Their world seemed to have collapsed with their hopes; the outlook was dark, so they looked *up*, and in that Uplook they heard a glorious and comforting promise.

Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven (Acts 1:11).

For what purpose? Much as the world needs His gospel, it is unlikely that His message or way of life would be more acceptable or popular today than it was 1900 years ago. But this second coming (Heb. 9:28) is different. No longer is He the lamb led to the slaughter, but the Lion of the tribe of Judah, conquering and to conquer (Rev. 5:5; 6:2). **LOOK UP!**

For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain (Isaiah 26:21).

He will not punish without a last emphatic warning. Before the apocalypse of the crowned Messiah, a Fore-runner will be sent. **LOOK UP!**

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse (Malachi 4:5, 6).

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come and restore all things (Matthew 17:11).

Then comes the ultimatum. Human misgovernment is ordered to pack up and depart—its day is over. A new age dawns; a new power looms on the horizon—the power of Jesus Christ, King of all the earth! **LOOK UP!**

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come (Rev. 14:6, 7).

Behind the appeal is *force*. The time for moral suasion

is over, the final clean-up at hand. In spite of a desperate resistance, the work of eliminating the incorrigible element and uprooting the ancient evils will be vigorously and swiftly pushed to completion. The nations will find it vain to fight against God.

For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many (Isa. 66:15, 16).

And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call upon my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God (Zech. 13:8, 9).

With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness (Isaiah 26:9).

Christ and the saints—rulers of a new world! But the majority of the saints are now resting in the tomb. How then will it be possible for them to share in this mighty work? Again we look up for the answer.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words (I. Thess. 4:16, 18).

Comforting indeed! The Uplook is getting better all the time. Now let us see what the inspired Prophets saw of that glorious time to come when they lifted their eyes from earth's sordid scenes to the mountains of Jehovah. Pessimists may croak that peace is impossible; that there always have been wars and strife and there always will be, human nature being what it is, etc., etc. This is merely the result of the Back-look, and the Outlook. **LOOK UP!**

But in the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it (Micah 4:1—4).

The method of obtaining this ideal state is simple, direct and effective.

For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted (Isaiah 60:12).

And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one (Zech. 14:9).

All nations are then under one flag—no chance for international war; every inhabitant of that one nation happy and contented—no possibility of revolution or civil strife. There *can* be "peace on earth, good-will toward men," and there *will* be. But there is much more. **LOOK UP!**

(Continued on page 13)

GOD IS MERCIFUL

"WHAT is the matter, John?"

This salutation greeted the ears of a man walking slowly along the quiet street, engrossed in deep thought.

John Martin looked up as his neighbor stopped, and answered, "I am puzzled. I have always supposed that God was merciful and just, but last night I went to hear that revivalist that is in town, and he said that we'd have to burn forever in the greatest agony if we didn't join a church. I don't know that he said just those words, but that is what he meant."

"Don't let that worry you, John; the revivalist said it. God tells us through Paul in Romans 2:4 that it is the goodness of God that leads men to repentance. Is it goodness to keep a fellow burning forever? No, no!"

"Well, he brought along things, Jim, that looked as though he had the right of it. He read about a lake of fire and brimstone into which all liars, and thieves, murderers, yes, and even the unbelieving are to be cast."

James Thornton shook his head. He felt much disgusted that any one should so heap calumny upon a righteous God.

"Now, see here, John," said he, "do you think God has a big manufacturing plant somewhere turning brimstone out by the billions of tons to keep the fires of orthodox hell burning? No! God is not in that business. Have you read what the Bible really says about that lake of fire?"

"No, but I believe that revivalist did, somewhere in Revelation."

"Yes, I know where he read; it was Revelation 21:8. But I will make a good guess that he never read the whole verse, because it ends, 'which is the second death.' Now, you listen, John! it says 'second death'! Does that sound like torment, like burning forever? Why didn't he read the 14th verse of the chapter before? That says 'death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.' They tell you hell is where the fire is burning. Do you think hell is cast into itself? Nonsense! This is in the message Jesus, after He had ascended to the Father, sent back by an angel to John on the Isle of Patmos. Do you think he made a mistake? Which will you believe, Jesus, or man?"

"Why, Jesus, of course. But I don't see, Jim, what you are going to do with some other texts. This man read Matthew 3:8, where John the Baptist was preaching to the people, and told them Jesus would gather the wheat into the garner and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

"Unquenchable fire! Did you ever see such a thing? What about that fire in Maine that burned up town after town? The newspapers reported that it was beyond control of the fire departments. Is it burning yet?"

"Why, no, of course not; it burned out."

"That's true, John. If you could read the meaning in the Hebrew Lexicon you'd find 'fire is used to designate any destruction, whether of men or of things'; that 'to be destroyed by war is said to be destroyed by fire'; also that 'it is figuratively used of the judgments of God.' Now you have some sense to it. It means the judgments of God. John the Baptist was telling about God's judgments and warning the people to flee from the wrath to come. Was Jesus to stand there with a literal fan and winnow literal wheat from literal chaff and cart it away to a literal granary? Small business for such a noted personage as the King!"

"I never supposed they took that part of what John said as being literal."

"Why not? If the fire is literal, why not the rest of it? This just shows you how the wisdom of man works in handling the wisdom of God. They think figures of speech are beautiful in written and spoken language; and so they are. The Bible is full of it too, but if it suits their false creeds better to chop up the figures of speech

God uses and make hash of them, they do it, and hand it out for you to eat. Jesus told us what to eat, though. He said, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' Not out of the mouth of man, notice, but the mouth of God. Funny, men can't get the idea!"

"Yes, it is. I have read those texts, but we are so dense! What is this wheat then, and the chaff, the fan, and the granary?"

"It is all figurative. The wheat represents the righteous, the chaff the wicked, the granary the Kingdom of God, and the fire, as I said before, the judgments of God. The fan is the instrument used by Him to do the work until all the wicked are cut off and this earth becomes a fit place for the reign of His beloved Son. You know, we read in Psalm 2 that He will set His Son on His holy hill of Zion and give him the earth for an everlasting inheritance."

"My! Jim, this is wonderful! I must go to studying my Bible more so I won't be so easily fooled. You have relieved my mind of a great load. And now, tell me, what is this second death?"

"Why, that is just a penal death. These people who make a covenant with God to serve Him and then refuse to keep His commandments, but still get angry and commit all other kinds of iniquity, are destroyed when His judgments are in the earth."

"But why does it call it second death?"

"Well, we are accounted as dead while we live if we refuse to believe God's words and do as He commands us. And what are we dead in? Why, in trespasses and sins. We act and speak and think and do just as we please. We bear the fruits of the flesh, in other words. And in Galatians 5:19-21 you can read what they are. Those who 'do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' If they are not a part of God's family, He has to cast them out, doesn't He? In Psalm 92:7 it says: 'When the wicked spring as the grass,—we have reached that time, don't you think?—and all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall—shall what? Here is where God ought to tell us they should be cast into hell-fire for all eternity. No! it says 'they shall be destroyed forever'!"

"Why do they think that means burning forever?"

"All the world are drunk on the fables of men, as Paul, in II. Timothy 4:3, 4, said they should be. The Prophets, Jesus, and the Apostles all agree. They are not—like men—of 'many minds,' they are all of one mind. The Psalmist says they are to be destroyed, and Jesus says: 'Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.' Does that sound like eternal torment?"

"No; that is very plain. D-e-s-t-r-u-c-t-i-o-n doesn't spell eternal torment."

"Now, Paul was an Apostle to the Gentiles; wouldn't you think he'd be of one mind with the others, John?"

"Yes. And I believe he is, for I remember of reading somewhere that Paul said 'The wages of sin is death,' and that is not torment."

"You are correct. Paul says those very words in Romans 6:23. More than that, he tells us in Second Thessalonians that it is 'everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.' Shut out of the Kingdom, you see. Do you think Jesus and Paul were mistaken?"

"Not likely. They must agree."

"They do. The Prophet Malachi gives us a good idea of this burning. He says: 'The day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and . . . all that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, . . . that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.' Notice—burn them up! Nothing left to be tormented—all gone."

"I suppose, Jim, this explains other texts they use as proof for hell-fire, like the King commanding the tares to be cast into a fur-

nace of fire, gathered to be burned, and others."

"You have the idea. None of it is literal; it all refers to the utter destruction of the wicked in the great battle of God Almighty—Armageddon."

"And that is Armageddon!"

"Yes, this fire shall devour the Lord's adversaries. God is a being of love, justice and mercy. He created the earth and placed man upon it. He blesses all mankind with life and every good. He sent His Son, not only to teach, but to set them a righteous example as to how they should live; and gave Apostles, evangelists and teachers to continue the work. How has He been repaid? They tell lies about Him and despise His wise counsel. They killed the Prophets, crucified Jesus, wore out the saints, and trampled His Word under foot, until, as Mosheim the historian testifies, 'Truth lay buried under a senseless mass of superstitions, and was unable to raise her head.' That is why we have such an unreasonable and wicked doctrine as eternal torment."

"Well, Jim, where did the idea originate?"

"With the pagans. Virgil was a pagan and he wrote:

"Nay, when at last the life has fled,
And left the body cold and dead,
The painful heritage of clay;
Full many a long contracted stain
Perforce must linger long in pain,
So penal sufferings they endure. . . .
Some hang aloft in open view,
For winds to pierce them through and through,
While others purge their guilt deep-dyed
In burning fire or whelming tide."

"Dante's *Inferno* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* picture the same dreadful scene; but it all came from paganism, not from God. I don't wonder Ingersoll asked if it were possible for the ingenuity of man to extract one ray of consolation from the doctrine of hell, and could say: 'If that doctrine be true, is not your God an infinite criminal?' The people have read it in creeds and catechisms, confessions of faith; sung it in songs, heard it in sermons, until they believe it is true. No! it is a rank LIE!"

"You can't wonder, Jim, that people have been driven into insanity in anticipation of such a fate."

"That is a fine little boy of yours, John. Suppose, now, one day when you get home from the store you found your wife had taken him, because he did something naughty, and set his little feet on a red-hot stove and burned them off; and not satisfied with that, had taken a hot iron and burned out his little eyes. What would you think?"

"I'd know she'd lost her mind."

"Yes, and you'd send her to the State Hospital and have her put under observation, wouldn't you?"

"I certainly would."

"But this is nothing to what they say about God; He burns them to all eternity. Now, let us suppose your wife is all right but a neighbor makes up this story about her and circulates it all over the country. What would you do then?"

"I'd sue him for libel."

"But they lie this way about God. Do you think He is going to pass it by forever? No. All liars are going to have their part by and by in that 'lake of fire.' And the result? Second death; everlasting destruction."

"What gets me is to think that in this enlightened age people still teach this old pagan doctrine!"

"Yes, they still teach it. They like it; that is, for other people. They never think their father or mother, sister or brother, aunts, uncles, or cousins are there. Some time ago I read a poem so strikingly horrible I committed it to memory. Let me quote it to you.

"Infinite years in torment must I spend,
And never, never have an end.
Oh, must I lie in torturing despair
As many years as atoms in the air;

"When these are gone must I as many more
As grains of sand that crowd the ebbing shore;
When these run by, as many to ensue
As stems of grass spread out before our view;

"When these are gone, as many yet behind
As leaves of forest, shaken with the wind;
When these are gone, as many on the march
As starry lamps that gild the spangled arch;

"When these run by, there are yet as many more
As moments in the millions passed before;
When all these dreadful years are spent in pain
And multiplied by myriads again

"Till numbers drown the thought—could I suppose
That then my dreadful years were at a close
This would afford relief; but, oh! I shiver
To think these dreadful years must last forever!

* * * * *

"This gulf of dark despair wherein I lie,
It has no end—'tis all eternity."

"What a horrible, horrible picture!" cried his friend. "And to think they say it is in the Bible! What infamy!"

"Many have thrown this doctrine over in late years; but the trouble is, when they throw away the false creeds they throw the Bible away too, because they believe the Bible is to blame for the false theories."

"Well, Jim, I want more information. If eternal torment is not taught in the Bible, what is the use of a hell?"

"There is no such place."

"You don't believe in hell, then?"

"Yes, I do, the hell of the Bible. That word translated 'hell' is *sheol* in the Hebrew and *hades* in the Greek. Neither one has a single definition of a place of torment or burning; it simply means the grave."

"The grave! You don't say!"

"That's all it is, as sure as you live. The first place we find it is in Genesis 37:35, where Jacob, mourning for Joseph, said, 'I will go down into the grave [*sheol*] unto my son mourning.' The translators got it right here, *grave*. It says in Psalm 31:17, 'Let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave [*sheol*].' Instead of saying they will be shrieking in agony in an eternity of pain, the Psalmist says they are *silent* in *sheol*, in the grave. Is God to blame because men have translated *sheol* hell, when it should be grave?"

"Absolutely not!"

"Did you ever see Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott*, a word for word translation from the Greek? The author says: 'To translate *hades* by the word *hell*, as it is done ten times out of eleven in the New Testament, is *very improper*.'"

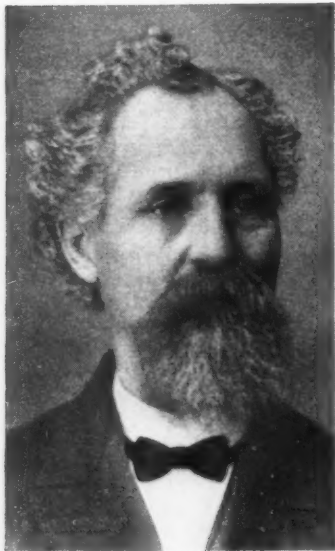
"Well, what about the worm that can't die and a fire you can't quench?"

"That is another word altogether. You read this in Mark 9. Jesus referred here to Gehenna. It is a proper noun and should never have been translated hell or anything else. Gehenna is the Valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem. The place was used to burn all the refuse of the city, including dead bodies of animals and executed criminals. The fire burned everything except around the edges and here the worms finished it up. Jerusalem lay in ruins for centuries. Do you think the fire kept burning and the worms living? Of course not! These texts teach the same lesson as the others—destruction."

"It shows God is merciful, anyway; that is more than the doctrine of eternal torment can do."

"How could eternal torment be true, John, when Jesus in His last message sent down from heaven after He had ascended to the Father promises that God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. *No more pain!* If hell-fire eternally burns, would there not still be pain?"

(Continued on page 13)



THE REV. L. T. NICHOLS

PAST AND PRESENT

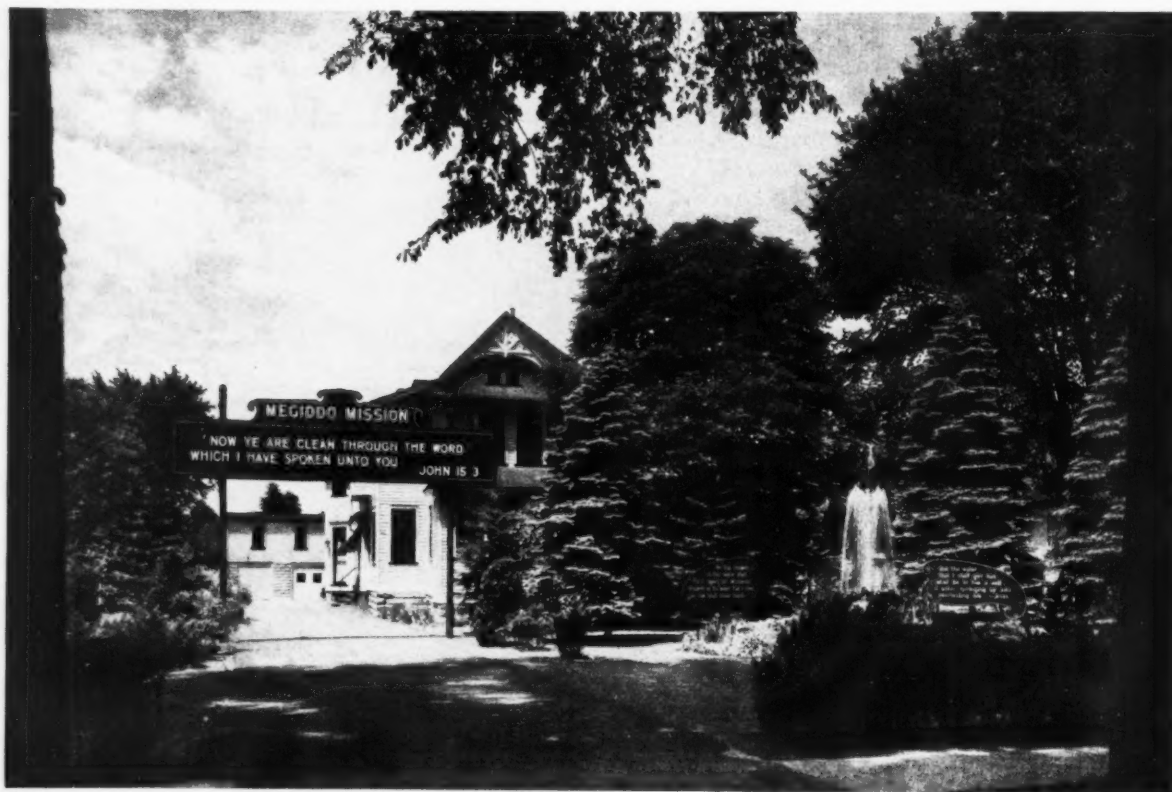
Upon the death of the Rev. L. T. Nichols, Feb. 28, 1912, leadership of the Megiddo Mission fell upon his assistant, the Rev. Maud Hembree, who ably filled the position until her decease in 1935. She was succeeded by Ella M. Skeels, sister of the founder, and a leading worker. At her death in 1945, Percy J. Thatcher, her assistant, was elected president and pastor of the Mission.

He was born in Haydensville, Mass., on June 3, 1880. In 1905, while working in Rochester, he became acquainted with the Megiddo Mission Band, and, impressed by their teachings and practices, he soon became a member. For many years before his pastorate he was teacher of a Bible class, and active in young people's work and missionary enterprises.

His wife, Edith Damon Thatcher, was teacher of the Megiddo Day School for 37 years, and is an able helper in all branches of the church work.



THE REV. PERCY J. THATCHER



THE MEGIDDO MISSION HOME

This consists of four residential buildings, housing a number of families as well as the church offices.

In the center building is our home assembly room—a modest chapel with seating capacity of 150, and equipped with a Baldwin electronic organ. Here—at the sounding of the Mission bell which invites to worship and praise—for some forty years earnest Christians have been gathering for morning exhortation and evening devotions.

Here kindred hearts are daily knit together by the bonds of Christian fellowship.

The large sign arching the driveway proclaims its Scriptural message from some Prophet, Jesus or an Apostle, and arrests the gaze of the passer-by.

The fountain—with its changing lights by night, and its flowing stream which symbolizes living water—is a beautiful memorial to the Rev. M. Hembree.

The Meaning of Megiddo

THE small religious body founded by the Rev. L. T. Nichols in the year 1880, and located in Rochester since 1904, has long been identified by the name, *Megiddo Mission*. To the disinterested populace this is just another name designating another unknown sect. To interested inquirers the name is puzzling. To us, the devout members, it is deeply significant.

To comprehend the meaning of *Megiddo* is to know some of the historical facts about the ancient village bearing that name. So let us in fancy wing our flight to the land of Palestine, and there alight in the very heart of Israel known as the plain of Esdraelon. (This is the Greek for the corresponding Biblical "Valley of Jezreel.") The extreme fertility of the country immediately attracts our attention, but more arresting to the gaze northward, southward and eastward are the surrounding mountains. The great plain of Esdraelon extends across Central Palestine from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, separating the mountain ranges of Carmel and Samaria on the south from those of Galilee on the north. Eastward rises the green and rounded summit of Tabor, clothed with terebinth and oak, and south of Tabor can be seen the graceful outlines of Little Hermon and Gilboa.

A beautiful panorama indeed—while the armies of the ages halt for a brief space to let us feast upon its grandeur. For we are keenly aware of the fact that this smiling tract of land has been the stage of countless battles. Hardly an equal area of earth has so often been drenched with the blood of men. No doubt many conflicts were waged here in far-off times of which no record remains. However peaceful as it may appear to us, we know that Pharaohs and Ptolemies, Emirs and Arsacids, Judges and Consuls have all contended for its mastery. It has glittered with the lances of the Amalekites; it has trembled under the chariot-wheels of Sesostris; it has echoed the twanging bow-strings of Sennacherib; it has been trodden by the phalanxes of Macedonia; it has clashed with the broadswords of Rome; it has rung with the battle-cry of the Crusaders, and thundered with the artillery of England and of France.

Why, it may be wondered, has this small piece of land always been viewed by aggressors with such a covetous eye? The answer lies in the fact that Palestine forms a vital stretch in the avenue between North and South, and here in this plain of Esdraelon, Europe and Asia, Judaism and Heathenism, Barbarism and Civilization, the Old and the New Covenant, the history of the past and the hopes of the present, have always seemed to meet.

The principal point of difficulty in traversing this age-old avenue connecting North and South is the solid mountain range which borders Esdraelon on the south. The coast land where Mount Carmel protrudes into the sea certainly affords no suitable passageway for the transport of great armies, nor do the rocky hills of Samaria.

It is at this point that the town of Megiddo comes into prominence, for here at the head of the Megiddo hillock, at the east end of the long Carmel ridge, runs one of the most famous passes of history. It is through this pass at Megiddo that many of earth's conquerors with their armies have marched, as well as numerous caravans of traders. Occupying as it does so vital a strategic position, the town of Megiddo necessarily has been heavily forti-

fied for centuries, as its definition, "a place of troops," indicates.

Notable among the battles of Biblical history waged in this vicinity was that in which Sisera's host was overthrown. At Deborah's command Barak assembled the armies of Israel, 10,000 chosen men, over against Mount Tabor. They were pitiful in number and equipment against Sisera's Canaanites with their nine hundred chariots of iron. But Deborah remained undismayed. From their vantage point on Mount Tabor they had watched Sisera mustering his troops at the river Kishon near Megiddo. Now her voice rang out, electrifying every soldier: "Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee?" With a mighty rush Barak charged down the mountain, his men after him, and "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera by the waters of Megiddo." At this point Jewish history indicates that assistance came pouring from the skies in torrents of rain which made a bog for the iron chariots of Sisera; whereupon they became easy prey to the active, lightly armed foot-soldiers. Sisera alighted from his chariot and fled away afoot to his death in the tent of Jael.

The song of Deborah and Barak records the high tide of the furious battle waged on the great plain of Esdraelon that day. In the triumphant finale she combined prayer and praise, as she sang, "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."

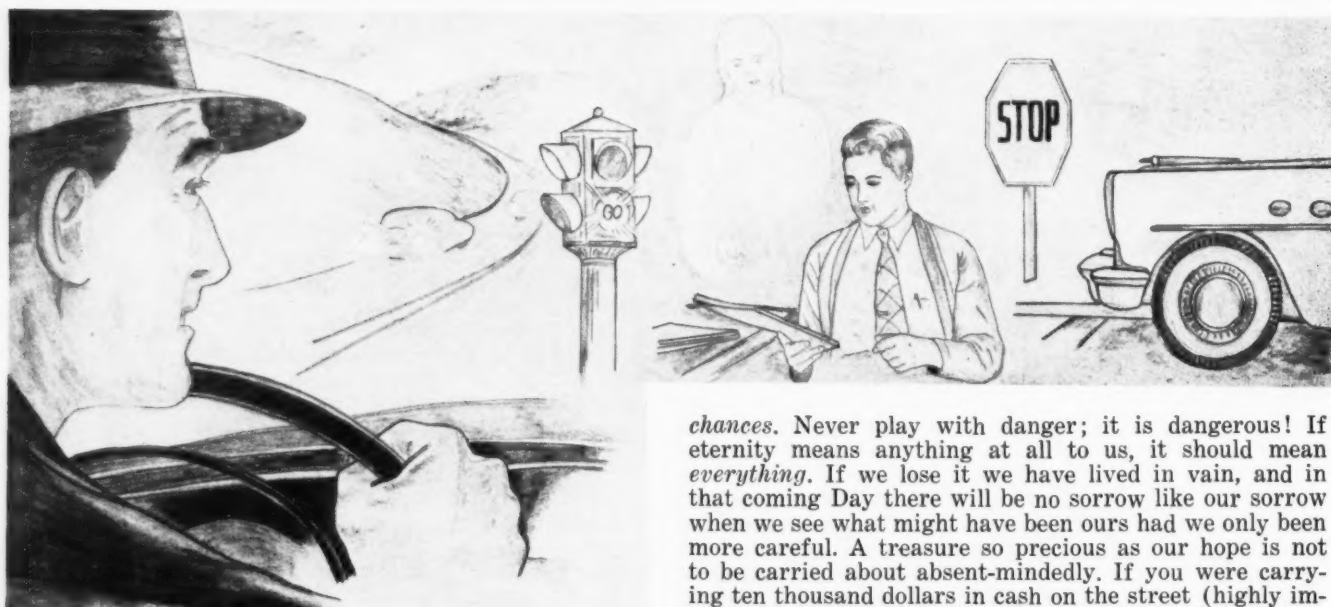
Not many years hence the children of the East were on this same battleground surprised and routed by Gideon's three hundred chosen men. Later, near the same place, the great battle with the Philistines was fought in which Saul and his sons, worsted in the plain, retired to perish on the heights of Gilboa. In the bed of the Kishon at the foot of Carmel, Elijah slaughtered the servants of Baal. Dark memories of the destruction of Ahab's house by the furiously driving Jehu linger round Jezreel. Ahaziah, fleeing from the avenger across the plain, was overtaken and cut down at Megiddo. In the vale by Megiddo, Josiah sought to stay the northward march of Pharaoh-necho, and himself fell wounded to death.

So it can be seen that much of the fighting during the wars of the Jews occurred within the circle of these hills.

In addition to its being the subject of history, Megiddo also figures in Bible prophecy. The apocalyptic writer stages Armageddon—the Greek transliteration from the Hebrew Har-Magedon, with "Mountain of Megiddo" its English equivalent—as the symbolic battlefield where the final contest between the forces of good and evil is ultimately to take place (Rev. 16:16). Since the low hills around Megiddo, with their outlook over the plain of Esdraelon, have witnessed perhaps a greater number of bloody encounters than have ever stained a like area of the world's surface, and since some of Israel's chief victories have been won there, it is with peculiar appropriateness that this is selected as the arena of the last mighty struggle between right and wrong—Christ and His army against "the beast, and the kings of earth, and their armies" (Rev. 19:19).

So much for Megiddo, past and future.

(Continued on page 9)



A Rule of the Road . . . Safe Driving

THE past summer has witnessed an intensive campaign in the press and elsewhere for safer driving, something which is needed badly enough. The everyday toll of death and injury on the streets and highways—not to mention holiday casualties—is something of a national disgrace. None of us can be too careful. In fact, Christianity and reckless driving are incompatible, nor will the true Christian be careless in any temporal matter involving life, limb or property.

It is well to remember the rules of the road,
And better to practice the same;
Each driver should be very sure to do this,
Who professes the Christian name.
Observe the signs, warning of danger and curves;
Remember they mean what they say;
And always be sure to keep gas in the tank
To avoid walking part of the way.
Don't ever be piggish, but keep to your lane,
Give room to those who would pass by;
Always keep well behind the car that's ahead,
Never speed on roads wet or dry.
If you're sure to obey the rules of the road,
It will help in the narrow way
Where rules are important to help us along
To reach Zion safely some day.

There is a deep lesson, a timely warning for us in all this agitation for safety. True, we need at times to be reminded of our responsibilities in the natural; but that is not so hard to take, since most of us value this life rather highly, and some of us have learned that it hurts to get hurt. But how highly do we value eternal life? If really interested in gaining it, we will constantly be thinking about it, and practicing safety.

Just what do we mean by safety? Simply *taking no*

chances. Never play with danger; it is dangerous! If eternity means anything at all to us, it should mean *everything*. If we lose it we have lived in vain, and in that coming Day there will be no sorrow like our sorrow when we see what might have been ours had we only been more careful. A treasure so precious as our hope is not to be carried about absent-mindedly. If you were carrying ten thousand dollars in cash on the street (highly improbable in these days), would you be likely to lose yourself in window-shopping or daydreaming? If you would, you can't carry money for me! You can see this point readily. Very well: "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver," said the Psalmist. How is it with us?

We see, then, that the first step in safety is *thinking*. A safety poster once displayed on our streets read, "Think, driver, think!" This means eternal vigilance, never relaxing the tension in the fight against self. "I didn't think," is as poor an excuse as "I didn't know it was loaded." Both wore out centuries ago. Let our slogan be, "Think, Christian, think." Have both eyes wide open to detect danger and *avoid* it.

Right there lies the basic principle of the whole safety program: Avoid temptation. This is to keep away from things which we know, or even suspect, cannot be handled safely. Sensible men recognize the fact that certain things are best left alone. Among them we might mention thin ice, cross dogs, brakeless automobiles, hornets' nests, supposedly unloaded firearms—the list is a long one. But infinitely more dangerous are the thirteen evils enumerated in Mark 7, some of which are present naturally in each of us, and any one of which can easily destroy us. When we learn to treat the warning sign "Foolishness," with as much respect as we would a "smallpox" placard, we can be said to be really awake and thinking. When we abhor and avoid jealousy or impurity as we would leprosy or even measles, we are progressing. Fear is a bad master when uncontrolled, but normal fear is the preserver of the human race. So in the Christian warfare: dare to do right, whatever the cost; but be mortally afraid of doing wrong. Be afraid of yourself.

A concrete example or two of the application of this Divine principle of caution might not be amiss. Perhaps you like to read, even to the extent of "stopping to pass the time of day with every printed vagabond that plucks at your sleeve." That is a failing which has to be watched incessantly, or soon the mind is filled with a hodgepodge of trifles, with no room for spiritual things. Certain kinds of books and magazines are easier to pick up than to lay down, and the logically safe thing to do is to refrain from picking them up. Most of us have plenty of curiosity, a certain amount of which is essential to prog-

ress. But the morbid or insatiable curiosity which would lead us to touch, taste, handle, or at least know a little about everything in the world, good or bad, is a dangerous thing. There is much it is better not to know; and Paul had the right idea when he said, "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple [ignorant] concerning evil." So if an unedifying picture or printed article lies in your line of vision, and the "old man" clamors for another look, that is the time to *think*. Better be safe than sorry. Think, "Would I like to share this with the ministering angel with the thought of whose presence I have comforted myself?" If not, hands off. Look the other way. A good driver keeps his eyes on the road, and does not gaze at every passing sight.

A man has a strong love of approbation—a good thing if properly guided, but a deadly menace unless controlled by the brakes of Truth. He has two friends; one has a way of pointing out his faults, the other obligingly feeds him flattery. His safety sense can be measured by the company he seeks.

The above brings to mind one of the best-known problems of literal motoring, namely, the "back seat driver." We all know him, and love him as we do an alarm clock. Sometimes he is an unmitigated nuisance; but there are times, we must admit, when his counsel is good. However much we may dislike his warning voice in our automobiles, we know he is absolutely indispensable in the spiritual. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," and none of us can see himself perfectly through his own eyes. Reproofs and warnings are the way of life, and we should listen humbly and thankfully no matter through whom they come or the manner in which they are bestowed. The spiritual back seat driver is a safe companion to have along, even if he is not perfect himself, or if he happens to be a member of our own family. This last is hard to take sometimes.

The battle with wandering thoughts is an endless one. When a line of thought presents itself which must inevitably lead to a profitless or destructive conclusion, or when doubt or depression begins to work, play safe. Drop it immediately. Change it forcibly. Repeat a passage of Scripture, or a dozen. Have a chapter in the course of memorizing for such an emergency.

Of course, in the cases cited, victory is possible only by following the example of our Master who had so filled His mind with the law of God that every temptation was met instantly and automatically with, "It is written." If we are too lazy mentally to study or meditate or remember the rules of the road, we are driving in the dark with no lights, and the ditch awaits us at the first curve.

Let no one cherish even the faintest idea that it is unmanly or cowardly to flee from temptation, or that safety is synonymous with slowness. Often it calls for quick and dramatic action. Joseph was quite a man, and on one occasion he set us an excellent example. He ran. Had he stayed to argue it out or to see what would happen, trusting in his own strength, the story might have had a less brilliant ending.

What is the object of this constant vigilance, this unrelaxed caution and care? What is our destination? "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Yes, the careful drivers, those who remembered the rules and obeyed the signals, shall arrive! And what a celebration when the last traveler rolls in safely at the end of the long, long trail and the prizes are awarded. May we all be there with clear records and confident hearts, when the King comes in to see the guests.

THE MEANING OF MEGIDDO

(Continued from page 7)

As for the present—the above stated facts lending significance—the Megiddo Mission is "a place of troops," not where literal soldiers clash in carnal warfare, but where true soldiers of God are assembled to unite their strength against the forces of evil. As a small organization, there is but little that we can do to check the swelling ranks of wickedness in the world at large; but there is much that we can do to control the evils which exist within the realm of our own hearts and lives, and to this—the conquest of one man—we have dedicated all that we have and are. After all, the triumph of spiritual warfare lies in the re-made man, the man created in righteousness and true holiness. The ultimate glory of this man lies in his eternal reward, life forevermore in the Kingdom of God.

Here at Megiddo can be seen men and women clad in the whole armor of God, their minds girded with truth, their feet shod with the sandals of peace, righteousness as a breastplate, faith as a shield, the hope of salvation as a helmet, and the ever sharpened two-edged sword of the Spirit poised to strike to the death any evil which seeks to exert its destructive influence. And here, as ancient Megiddo would suggest, the land is wet with blood, for we must die daily; we must resist unto blood, striving against sin; we must crucify the old man with its affections and lusts.

Increasingly intense grows the battle, for we know that the time is short. Presently our Captain and King shall return and pronounce to all true soldiers the sweetest words that could fall upon mortal ears, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, . . . speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned." O blessed day when this spiritual warfare is accomplished! Then may it please God to bestow upon us crowns of victory, laurels of life and garlands of glory.

And though today the true Israelites compose the despised minority, "the fewest of all people," yet if we "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," if when the battle waxes hot we are true soldiers—true as the steel of a blade—then we are most certainly on the winning side, for our God fights for us even as of yore on the hills of Megiddo when Israel faced the mightier enemy hosts. Though all earth should rally against us, we shall remain on the winning side now and forever, for "if God be for us, who can be against us?"

And when the clash of Armageddon warfare merges into the thousand years of peace, the Book's choicest promise to us shall be fulfilled: "Great shall be the day of Jezreel" (symbolic name for 'Israel,' or 'true soldiers of God'). This is what *Megiddo* means to us.

"Dear Megiddo, how I love thee! Be thou ever mine;
May I never from thee wander, nor at thee repine.
Rule supreme my ev'ry action; guide me all the way,
May I ever do thee homage by my life each day.

"Dear Megiddo, thou hast helped me, from the world of sin,
From a life of deepest error, victory to win.
Dear Megiddo, thou hast found me but an unewn stone;
Thou hast taught my feet to follow Christ, my Lord, alone.

"Dear Megiddo, pure and faithful—thou the fount of Truth—
To the Kingdom thou wilt lead me, to renew my youth.
I will praise thee, magnify thee—blessed of the Lord—
I will guard and e'er defend thee, loyal to my word."

Great in the Things Which Last

IN WRITING of the lives of great men, it is customary to evaluate their accomplishments in terms of what benefit they have bestowed upon others in their immediate circle, or on humanity at large. It would be utterly impossible in a brief sketch to enumerate the great men of the past and the present who have added immeasurably to the comforts and well-being of countless millions.

Without mentioning individual names, we can think of many inventors whose accomplishments have raised our standard of living to the highest plane the world has ever known and made it a better place in which to live.

We should indeed be thankful for the temporal blessings made possible by the lives of great men. But with all the advantages—and we cannot deny that they are great advantages—there is one thing seriously lacking: *these things do not last.*

We of the Megiddo Mission honor a man who is little known and even less honored by the world, yet was great in the things which last, great in the sight of God. When the automobile has become as obsolete as an ox cart, when the airplane is a clumsy and slow means of transportation, and the radio and television a cumbersome and useless means of communication, the accomplishments of our founder, the Reverend L. T. Nichols, will just begin to be apparent to the world. He was great in the things which last. His honor will last forever. He can enjoy the fruit of his labors not for twenty-five years, not for fifty years, not for a hundred years, but *to all eternity.*

Men have lived who made themselves great among men by amassing immense fortunes, but the power to enjoy their wealth was lacking, for death soon terminated their careers. By contrast, our founder was content to spend and be spent for his God, employing all his time and energies to lay up for himself treasures in heaven, "where thieves do not break through nor steal." Becoming rich in good works, untold wealth shall be his in the "world to come."

Promoters of business enterprises have made a name for themselves by helping others to a position of financial stability; but what is that compared with endowing men and women with eternal values, the "unsearchable riches of Christ," helping them to lay up in store for themselves a foundation of good works against the time to come, that they may lay hold upon eternal life?

Military men have earned for themselves the title of "great" by outstanding successes on the battlefield, only to discover during the fleeting moment of victory that the "paths of glory lead but to the grave"; while the man whose memory we cherish, by accomplishing the greater victory over himself shall one day experience victory over death and the grave, be made equal to the angels, an inheritor of eternal bliss.

Brilliant educators have won the praise of serious-minded people by helping ambitious youth to pass the portals into the inner sanctum of knowledge; while he who was great in the things that last helped happy life-seekers to obtain that wisdom which holds in one hand "riches and honor," and in the other, "length of days" in which to enjoy them.

Ambitious men have striven to broaden the horizon of human knowledge by delving into the secrets of the atom, probing into the structure of the interior of the earth, scanning the heavens with the most powerful telescope modern science can devise; but at best, scientific knowl-

edge is fleeting, ever becoming outmoded by newer discoveries, and it holds no key to an endless existence. Our founder was great in the things of real value, the things that last. He sought for knowledge of the saving truths of the Bible as for silver and gold and as for hidden treasures, and was rewarded by finding the "pearl of great price," and then passed it on to his fellow men.

It seems to be characteristic of human nature to be attracted to the individual who has a pleasing personality, who is friendly, always smiling and patting us on the back, telling us we have no serious faults, and whatever we do or say is just about right.

If we should be sailing down a river unfamiliar to us, and were approaching some dangerous falls, rapids or whirlpools, would we want this type of an individual for a pilot? If we were desirous of improving our skill in a certain undertaking and should employ a teacher to instruct us, would we want the teacher who repeatedly told us we were all right? The success (or, more accurately, lack of success) of the spiritual leaders of the world today is based upon the above formula. "Do the best you can," say, "Lord have mercy" before you die, and "you are on the way to glory," is a very pleasing doctrine. But if sincerely desirous of obtaining eternal life and the joys of the future, we do not want that kind of leader. And the man whose memory we honor today never spoke to please men.

Many centuries ago two kings—Jehoshaphat of Judah and Ahab of Israel—were planning to go to battle together against Syria, and the king of Israel inquired of four hundred prophets: "Shall I go to Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall I forbear?" And to a man they answered: "Go up; for God will deliver it into the king's hand." They gave the king the answer he wanted to hear. But king Jehoshaphat was more cautious. He said, "Is there not a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him?" King Ahab answered, "There is yet one man, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he never prophesies good unto me, but always evil." The outcome of the battle proved who was in the right.

Human nature has not changed since the day of King Ahab. And very often we would rather listen to the advice of the four hundred smooth, pleasing, you-are-all-right fellows, than the one lone prophet of the Lord who is crying aloud and sparing not, declaring unto Jacob his transgression and unto Israel his sin. Which prophet do we want: the one great in pleasing our natural desires in temporal things, or the one great in the things which last? The founder of our Mission was great in the things which last. He would not speak more or less than what the Lord has said. It made no difference how much an individual might dislike the advice, if it was for his eternal good Brother Nichols never hesitated to give it. He fearlessly wielded the sword of the Spirit. It was his brave, fearless, courageous facing of all foes who were opposed to God's law, which assured for him a high place on God's honor roll.

It is so easy to give lip service to our leader. But upon deeper thinking we know the only honor our founder would appreciate would be the honor of a perfect life, a perfect following of the commandments which he uncovered from the rubbish of ages; for only by a godly life can we honor the man who was *great in the things which last.*

PERSPECTIVE

AMONG the numerous technical definitions of this word, appears this one: "A view as seen from a particular station point." If you are standing at one station point and I am standing at another station point, and we are both looking in the same direction at the same object, we do not see exactly the same scene. This is perspective. Where we stand makes a difference in what we see, and the impression we receive. Sometimes a very little difference in where we stand can make a great difference in our impression, and a very great difference in our reaction.

A college is situated on the beautifully terraced eastern slope of a narrow valley. On the western slope of this valley is the residential part of a village. Late one afternoon a professor's wife looked out of her window and saw the flaming glory of a vivid western sunset reflected in each windowpane of the college buildings across the little valley. Wishing to share this beautiful view with her friend who lived in the next house lower on the hillside street, she stepped to the telephone and called her. But her friend could see no beauties reflected in the college windows. The first woman could scarcely believe that her friend in the lower house could not see what she was seeing. They were looking at the same buildings, from the same direction—almost. Then she exclaimed, "Hurry up here, and you can see it." And sure enough, when her friend arrived, and looked out at the same window, she too saw each college window glowing with a fiery golden beauty. Together they enjoyed the unusual scene until it faded with the sinking sun.

Perspective makes each station point a different viewpoint. It makes a difference where we stand.

Viewpoint depends upon where we stand. From a distance a mountain peak appears smaller and smoother than when we have painfully climbed toward the summit and feel we must surely be almost there. That easy slope we saw from the plain is no longer short, and certainly no easy slope. Each step demands real effort to push oneself upward.

Some differences are real, and some are only apparent. Perspective refers to the viewer's position and not that which is seen. Our perspective does not change a scene one whit in its physical make-up; but our perspective can easily change our understanding and appreciation of that scene. And so it is with the Kingdom and the future glories God will bring about on this earth. God's plans are definite and certain, in accord with His eternal purpose. But what we see through the eye of faith, and what we believe and what we do about it, depend upon where we stand. As a Christian, each of us has a different perspective. The important question is this: Is our perspective the right one for us? Is it good enough? Is it high enough?

Wisdom "standeth in the top of high places . . ." (Prov. 8: 2). Still higher, Wisdom calls, to a higher, more glorious station point. The view of the Kingdom is better, the inspiration is grander. But we cannot follow Wisdom's invitation unless we are anxious to stand higher, to do better, to be better. Where we are standing today is never the best. It may be better than yesterday, but perhaps only the slightest bit better. When Wisdom calls, let us push up higher, much higher, to that better station point. Only the foolish stand still; and the Psalmist tells us, "The foolish shall not stand in thy sight" (Psalm 5: 5). We all need a better station point than we have. Today's

perspective of the grand glory that is eternity, just isn't good enough, if we expect to enter into that glory.

When Moses approached the burning bush, the Angel told him, "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground." When first the sweet sound of divine Truth came to us, we too realized we were standing on holy ground. But if we are only acknowledging the wonders of Truth, our standing is no better than any professed Christian. They also stand in awe. We shall see no more of the Kingdom than the world will, from such a station point. We must step up higher. We must "stand in awe and sin not."

Any station point only a little higher may seem to give a little better view or a little broader vision. Perhaps it seems very much better if we are looking backward, when we should be looking into the future or at the heights ahead. If we are looking back, we may think we are really doing pretty well. But this is the place Paul warns us about, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I. Cor. 10: 12). The safer place and the grander view is another station point, much farther, a great deal higher up. The view is always much better higher up.

The Lord ordered Moses to stand before Pharaoh and demand freedom for his people. This was a dangerous place, but it was the place his service was required. And that was the place Moses always stood, exactly where the Lord wanted him. "But Peter stood at the door without." It was a poor station point. If he had not been able to encourage his Master by his presence, at least a little of his Master's courage might have served to stimulate him. In there where he could have gone with that other Apostle, they would have known he was identified with Jesus. Probably no one would have asked him, "Art thou one of this man's disciples?" (John 18: 17). At least the curious damsel would not have asked him. We see it made a difference where Peter stood. His perspective just was not good enough standing out there warming himself, looking after his own comfort. Are we standing close enough to where God wants us to stand today?

The Pharisee of Jesus' parable loved to stand in the temple and pray to be seen of men. He loved to recite his good works. He was seeking honor of men. If we are seeking honor of men, our station point is just as poor as that Pharisee's, much lower, much worse than the publican who stood with bowed head and said, "Lord be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18: 13). If we are still at the Pharisee's station point, it is time we moved up with the publican. If we cannot see God from there, at least we will be close enough so God will hear us.

In Nehemiah 9: 2 we are told that "the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers." Before they stood at this higher, nobler station point, with its wonderful perspective of God's Kingdom, they had to separate themselves from all strangers, all strangers to the true religion. It is just as David said, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners . . ." (Ps. 1: 1). It is so easy to stay at a comfortable station point in life, especially when there is company there, of a sort. But to reach the high points, we are called to push on alone—out of this world.

But higher and higher as we go, it takes more and

(Continued on page 13)

Meditations on the Word

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 119: 105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

In the utterance of these few words the Psalmist has expressed for the present time the thoughts of the Christian. In its completed form the Word of God, given through the Prophets, Jesus, and the Apostles, is a thorough furnisher unto every good work. It possesses the needful instruction pertaining to the doctrine, it teaches us the moral standard by which we must live to be a benefit to society, and, principally, to be fit to associate with God's eternal family. It contains wisdom for reproof, that men may see the error of their ways. It comforts in sorrow, strengthens in trials, revives our hopes in periods of weakness, and points to the day of eternal bliss.

The Word of God, the Bible, is the only Book that reveals the Creator to man. Certainly we are not here by chance. The universe, the earth, and man himself as a creature, all reveal a master Mind controlling a master plan. God's Word reveals this plan; it declares the purpose of earth's creation, and man's destiny on it. It alone furnishes the answers to these questions. It is the only lamp to lead us aright.

Can we say we love the Giver of all good and at the same time be indifferent to His Word? Can we have any reverence for the Almighty Being and never read His Word, never consult its pages concerning the course to take in life? Is it possible we ask the Great Protector's care and blessing, and despise in our hearts, if not openly, those who make the Word their entire guide and live by its every precept? *Is it possible? IS IT POSSIBLE?*

The call to God's service is indeed the noblest of earth's callings. The dearest, sweetest thing in life is the consciousness that we are called to be sons and daughters of the Almighty, that we can belong to His eternal family. His Word fills us with this hope. It alone contains such precious promises. It reveals to us what manner of men we must be and the works that are pleasing to Him.

How vastly different would be the state of worldly affairs if the Word of God were the guide of those in authority! The great founders of this country were aware of this truth. George Washington said, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible." Other great statesmen of his day agreed. Today, after a period when the Book has been neglected, our national situation is all but encouraging. The Great Light is needed as never before to lighten our way.

As an example of what the Bible can do for a nation, we quote a brief paragraph from Green's *Short History of the English People*. "No greater moral change has passed over a nation than passed over England in the latter part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. England became the people of a Book. And that Book was the Bible. It was read by every class of people in the nation, and the effect was amazing. The whole moral tone of the nation was changed." It is true the real sense of the Word was not understood, but the observance of some of the moral principles made the difference.

The Pilgrim Fathers who came to our shores and exerted such an influence in molding the foundation of the national life of this country, developed their ideals and the desire to be free to worship God in the atmosphere of that Elizabethan Bible Era.

By contrast, the Dark Ages with the numerous inhumanities to man was a period when the people were prohibited reading the Bible, even persecuted to death for doing so, and the Bible was driven out of circulation. This was not a mere coincidence. The people had no lamp nor guide for their erring feet.

It is possible to read the Book and not apply its principles to our lives. Many do this. They read the Book through yearly but are ignorant of its simplest teachings. They read it but do not comprehend the plan of God. This takes more than casual reading, it takes study and right division of the word of truth (II. Tim. 2: 15). Jesus was explicit: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8: 32). The Bible contains this truth which can be found by earnest study. We shall then experience true freedom and shall have a light to lead us through this dark night of sin.

It is not enough merely to *listen* to sermons. Individuals ought to *read* the Word of God for themselves and base their faith and hope directly on it. They should understand the Word sufficiently that they may conduct their lives according as God directs.

A genuine Christian character is the loftiest plane of human achievement. Without it all other attainments are futile; for when we stand before the Judge of all the earth to be rewarded according to our works (II. Cor. 5: 10), that perfect character alone will stand the test. The Word of God, read and treasured in men's hearts, becomes a direct influence to develop true character.

Inasmuch as it is our thoughts that have power over our lives, that which will develop our thoughts should be selected with care. To keep filling the mind with God's thoughts will tend to make our minds grow more like God's mind. As we become transformed in thought from the low level of human thinking to the high standard of God's thoughts, our whole life will be transformed into the moral image of our Master. So powerful is the Word of God if given a chance. As we walk in the path illuminated by its light we shall, out of our lowly, worthless state, become fit for companionship with the Creator.

"Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul . . ." With these words Moses admonished his people. The exhortation is as good today as it ever was and as needful. It is good to memorize thoroughly favorite Bible passages or even chapters, and repeat them often. And it is good to repeat these testimonies in exhorting one another to love and good works. Passages of Scripture firmly impressed on our minds become one of the best helps in developing within us a Christian disposition.

In former days God worked with His people through the angels. They contacted His Prophets directly, whether visibly or through visions, and made known to them the will of the Lord. The Holy Spirit power as experienced by the Apostles and others after Pentecost was another demonstration of how God worked with His people and confirmed the words spoken. However, as was predicted (I. Cor. 13: 10), when the written Word was completed the former methods of God's communication with man ceased (A. D. 70). Angelic visitation was no more, the power to do miracles ceased, knowledge imparted by the Holy Spirit or other supernatural means no longer was available. As Paul declared (I. Cor. 13: 13), "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." The Word alone remains in its completed form to give us faith and hope, and furnish light for our way. It fills this need perfectly.

THE OUTLOOK AND THE UPLOOK

(Continued from page 3)

Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment (Isaiah 32: 1).

The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.

Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders.

Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified (Isa. 60: 14, 17, 18, 21).

After the cleansing judgments have done their work, there will be a thousand years of rest, of reconstruction, re-education, reclamation, re-population with a race of happy, immortal subjects. But even this is not the end. There follows an eternity of life and progress and joyful activity. LOOK UP!

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity (Isaiah 35: 1, 5, 6, 10; 33: 24).

Seven centuries after Isaiah's day, when the Divine vision and prophecy was nearing completion and ready to be sealed, the Uplook had not changed except to be nearer, more definite and more glorious. John the Revelator, the last man to receive a message from God, pictured in sublime words and dramatic style the establishment and the glories of the eternal Kingdom of God on earth. What more fitting close to an inspired and inspiring Volume than the undying promise:

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful (Revelation 21: 3, 4, 5).

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It is a beautiful picture, isn't it, friends? It is worth working and waiting for, isn't it? But it is more than a lovely picture, a pleasant dream: soon it will be a reality. It cannot fail. The eternal God has decreed it; and even now events are swiftly taking form and driving us fast toward that great Change. Never mind the dark outlook, friends; the Uplook is grand!

The Christian warfare is worthy of our best endeavor; it is the greatest warfare in the world.

PERSPECTIVE

(Continued from page 11)

more effort and keener watchfulness. Is there no end? Well, we cannot yet say, as did that grand immortal being, "I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God" (Luke 1: 9). There are many station points, higher and still higher, at least one every day, which we must reach and pass before we can see the glories of the Millennium and become worthy to be equal with the lowliest angel. We must keep on keeping on. We need not only to aspire to a station point on Mount Zion with the Lamb and his 144,000, but we can really win that highest station point where our perspective will let us see the glories of the thousand years, and the Beyond.

If we are willing to buckle down and do the work, pay the price in effort and sacrifice to take the life of the "old man" and purify ourselves from all sin, we shall surely be given "places to walk among these that stand by," when the faithful are gathered on Mount Zion. We shall then not have to weep and wail with those who "shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment," when the kingdoms of this world fall before the victorious King of kings who shall reign forever and ever, and of whose Kingdom there shall be no end.

Yes, it does make a difference where we stand. The right and highest station point will give us an eternal perspective we shall never lose, where nothing can ever dim or obstruct our view. Any other station point will give us a perspective which is everlasting darkness.

GOD IS MERCIFUL

(Continued from page 5)

"Oh, that is wonderful! I would like to live in that country."

"You can, John, All you have to do to become a dweller there is to study God's Word, learn His will, and do what He commands. God is so merciful, that before He sends Jesus to pour out His judgments and clean up this old earth, He will first warn the people and give them an opportunity to turn and submit to Him."

"They will surely grasp the opportunity rather than be cut off, will they not?"

"No! The great majority will go on to destruction."

"Too bad! too bad! I think I shall go to work and study so as to be ready when He comes. I don't want to be destroyed. Thank you, Jim, you have enlightened me greatly. I am learning more the day after the revival than I did at that meeting last night."

"Come over to the house some evening, John. Bring your wife along, and we will take our Bibles and read some more of these wonderful things."

"Thank you, I will. Good bye."

John Martin walked home with a light heart, determined to sift to the bottom the things he had heard and believe only what was taught by men of one mind, governed by what God had left on record in His Word.

MY TASK

To do as He requests from day to day:
Each homely task performed the selfsame way;
My hands to serve, to comfort, soothe and bless;
My lips to speak, sing, and His love confess;
My feet prepared to go where He may lead;
My eyes alert to see another's need;
My heart at rest, because He walks with me;
My life a sacrifice, Lord, may this be. —Sel.

The Gospel Sound

The Gospel sound is sweet to me—
It has a thrilling melody
From Genesis down to the end.
Its sacred messages all tend
To buoy, and to elevate
Above this lowly, mortal state,
With visions of a Kingdom fair,
In which the righteous have a share.

The sweetest story ever told
Tells of a land where none grow old;
A land where sickness, sorrow, pain,
Yes, even death cannot remain.
But its inhabitants increase
In vigor, as the years release
New wonders for them to behold—
And they shall nevermore grow old.

The Gospel, blessed Word of God,
Reveals the path by Jesus trod.
It is indeed a lovely path,
Free from all jealousy and wrath.
No pride or strife is harbored there,
No sin despoils that thoroughfare;
But there is love, and joy, and peace,
With promise these shall never cease.

The Gospel speaks with certainty
On matters of eternity,
With no dissension anywhere
To mar its pages, passing fair.
Its thoughts are high, not of the dust,
Without a single hint of lust;
And they are founded on the Rock
That safely stands the hardest shock.

The Gospel is a friend indeed
To all who truly see their need;
A guide, a counselor, a chart,
For every sincere, contrite heart.
It is a compass for the bark
Of storm-tossed souls, lost in the dark;
Strength for the weak, sight for the blind,
The one true hope of all mankind.

This good news of the Kingdom brings
Word of the coming King of kings,
And tells us of a glorious reign,
When He shall rule earth's vast domain.
And that is why I love to hear
The Gospel, bringing hope and cheer
To sin-sick men, until we see
The dawning of ETERNITY.

—L. L. S.

